

IN THE UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
FOR THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

FILED

AUG 19 2011

Clerk, U.S. District & Bankruptcy
Courts for the District of Columbia

JUDICIAL WATCH, INC.,
425 Third Street, S.W., Suite 800
Washington, DC 20024,

Plaintiff,

v.

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE,
950 Pennsylvania Ave., N.W.
Washington, DC 20530-0001,

Defendant.

Civil Action No.

Case: 1:11-cv-01497

Assigned To : Huvelle, Ellen S.

Assign. Date : 8/19/2011

Description: FOIA/Privacy Act

COMPLAINT

Plaintiff Judicial Watch, Inc. brings this action against Defendant Department of Justice ("DOJ") to compel compliance with the Freedom of Information Act, 5 U.S.C. § 552 ("FOIA").

As grounds therefor, Plaintiff alleges as follows:

JURISDICTION AND VENUE

1. The Court has jurisdiction over this action pursuant to 5 U.S.C. § 552(a)(4)(B) and 28 U.S.C. § 1331.
2. Venue is proper in this district pursuant to 28 U.S.C. § 1391(e).

PARTIES

3. Plaintiff is a non-profit, educational foundation organized under the laws of the District of Columbia and having its principal place of business at 425 Third Street, S.W., Suite 800, Washington, DC 20024. Plaintiff seeks to promote integrity, transparency, and accountability in government and fidelity to the rule of law. In furtherance of its public interest

mission, Plaintiff regularly requests access to the public records of federal, state, and local government agencies, entities, and offices, and disseminates its findings to the public.

4. Defendant is an agency of the United States Government and is headquartered at 950 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW, Washington, DC 20530-0001. Defendant has possession, custody, and control of records to which Plaintiff seeks access.

STATEMENT OF FACTS

5. On June 23, 2011, Plaintiff submitted a FOIA request to Defendant, by facsimile and certified mail, seeking access to the following:

All records of communications between the Department of Justice and Estelle Rogers, Director of Advocacy for Project Vote. The timeframe for this request is January 20, 2009 to June 23, 2011;

6. Pursuant to 5 U.S.C. § 552(a)(6)(A), Defendant's response to Plaintiff's June 23, 2011 FOIA request was due within thirty working days of June 23, 2011, or by August 5, 2011.

7. According to U.S. Postal Service records, Plaintiff's FOIA request was received by Defendant on June 28, 2011.

8. As of the date of this Complaint, Defendant has failed to produce any records responsive to Plaintiff's June 23, 2011 FOIA request or demonstrate that responsive records are exempt from production. Nor has it indicated whether or when any responsive records will be produced. In fact, Defendant has failed to respond to Plaintiff's FOIA request in any substantive manner.

9. Because Defendant has failed to comply with the time limit set forth in 5 U.S.C. § 552(a)(6)(A), Plaintiff is deemed to have exhausted any and all administrative remedies with respect to its June 23, 2011 FOIA request. 5 U.S.C. § 552(a)(6)(C).

COUNT 1
(Violation of FOIA, 5 U.S.C. § 552)

10. Plaintiff realleges paragraphs 1 through 9 as if fully stated herein.

11. Defendant is unlawfully withholding records requested by Plaintiff pursuant to 5 U.S.C. § 552.

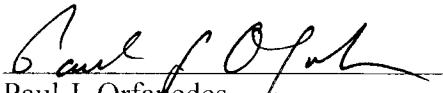
12. Plaintiff is being irreparably harmed by reason of Defendant's unlawful withholding of requested records, and Plaintiff will continue to be irreparably harmed unless Defendant is compelled to conform its conduct to the requirements of the law.

WHEREFORE, Plaintiff respectfully requests that the Court: (1) order Defendant to conduct a search for any and all responsive records to Plaintiff's June 23, 2011 FOIA request and demonstrate that it employed search methods reasonably likely to lead to the discovery of records responsive to Plaintiff's FOIA request; (2) order Defendant to produce, by a date certain, any and all non-exempt records responsive to Plaintiff's FOIA request and a *Vaughn* index of any responsive records withheld under claim of exemption; (3) enjoin Defendant from continuing to withhold any and all non-exempt records responsive to Plaintiff's FOIA request; (4) grant Plaintiff an award of attorneys' fees and other litigation costs reasonably incurred in this action pursuant to 5 U.S.C. § 552(a)(4)(E); and (5) grant Plaintiff such other relief as the Court deems just and proper.

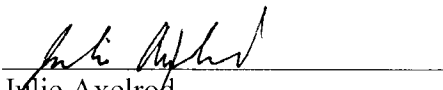
Dated: August 19, 2011

Respectfully submitted,

JUDICIAL WATCH, INC.


Paul J. Orfanedes
D.C. Bar No. 429716

✓


Julie Axelrod
D.C. Bar No. 10011557
425 Third Street, S.W., Suite 800
Washington, DC 20024
(202) 646-5172

✓

Attorneys for Plaintiff